

**Tourism Workforce Assessment Forum
Scottsdale*
April 2005**

Discussion Topic 1: Recruitment, Retention & Succession

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit entry-level employees?

- Referrals, previous employees, recommendations
- Every hotel has a system in place—housekeeping is biggest challenge. If training, referring employee gets money (between \$50 and \$75)
- Use interns successfully, and they look at industry [as a possible career]
- Seasonal employees from northern areas—snowbird market
- Job fairs, ads (newspapers and Internet)
- J-1 immigration programs; Interns from other countries, that's helped in high season (students) need good attitude and aspiration
- Entry-level [requires] service mentality
- Informal networks of existing team members, minimum time required
- Side bars offered or to be addressed

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit management employees?

- Internal promotions—employees who have demonstrated desires. Turnover is mostly lower level
- Newspaper/Internet—jobbing.com has been a big resource for us
- Management is usually folks who come in for long term
- We recruited from South American and it helped tremendously for interns and these are paid
- Available workforce and fit are big issues (personality issues)
- Word of mouth—can't afford to relocate folks
- University/Campus recruiting
- Retention of interns into management programs
- Referral from comparable properties management
- Fit vs. Not—1. Understands philosophy and 2. can pass on the vision to others

Besides wages, what factors contribute to employee turnover?

- Relationship with supervisor is a significant issue, more than wage
- Perception of fairness
- Opportunity for advancement
- Poor communication, disenfranchisement of employees; summer is now busy, which doesn't help; want to train but end up throwing them in the deep end
- Lack of recognition and training
- Lack of proper training due to job demands
- Benefits/401K, health care
- Benefits has helped us retain employees
- Transportation issues (public and congestion)
- Cut backs scare people off
- Lack of clearly stated mission

What are you doing/could you do to replace seasoned employees that will be retiring or leaving?

- We have a mentor program—people on executive committee mentor other employees
- Not dealt with regularly
- Recording their mental history
- Can we access retirees?
- Definition of "seasoned"—6 months to 3 years
- Benefits to less than full-time staff
- Seasonality—we all rely on attrition and turnover, we're all always rehiring
- 30-32 hours should get full benefits
- Cross-training seasonal and retiring employees, which will better prepare us
- Technology improvements to reduce PTEs

How are you preparing employees for advancement in your organization?

- Mentor program
- I'd hate to lose great people, so I try to keep them in mind as positions become available
- Management training from management company or outside training

- Training opportunities, we have a leadership event coming up—4 sessions years-long to bring people up
- Small coaching program for leadership, learning through failure, etc, give them the authority and position to grow
- Moving people to various properties helps
- Task forces, we help other hotels, its great for cross-training and other exposure
- Cross training in other departments
- Specific topical skills training
- Annual reviews and succession planning

What would be the components of a guest worker program that would meet the needs of the industry and also align with homeland security efforts?

- Having worked in foreign countries, concern is that we aren't displacing workers that are local, need to demonstrate that
- We have a growing Sudanese population. They come in and are legal—but there are language issues. They need basic skills training and culture training
- Is it because that job is difficult to keep—it's pay-based, entry-level
- It's them not understanding. [Groups] like Africans and Latin Americans clash—it can be a problem
- Housing—need housing for guest workers. There's an issue...that and transportation
- We can assume industry supports this
- Compliance is important
- Seasonality
- Not replacing availability work force
- Organizationally-based
- Child care availability

Discussion Topic 2: Industry Trends

By the year 2020, 26% of the population in Arizona will be 60 years of age or older. What impact will the aging of the baby boomer generation have on your industry?

- CVB hosted a series on generations to focus on how we market and build for that—its product development that is interested
- Generational-ist research being conducted
- Gen X has different goals, mores, ethics
- Baby boomer ethics must deal with Gen X and Gen Y
- Service—that was so important but service is gone. How do we get that back? Ethics are gone and its difficult to train people
- Different expectations, less loyalty
- This is a critical issue that requires more conversation

What steps can be taken to help your company deal with these impacts?

- Some redesign-standards, accessibility
- Healthy food selections
- Fitness areas
- Defibrillators
- Physical accommodations
- Spa requirements increasing
- Improved fitness and health
- Grand child care
- Heal portions (half salads)
- Service training to aging clientele
- Lighting levels

What about aging staff?

- How far do we go in accommodating?

What other social trends (cultural, economic, demographic, political) do you anticipate impacting your industry?

- Downward trend in golf—directly relevant
- Less golf—fees need to come down, that needs to change, and there are water issues (declining availability of water and increasing cost)
- Dollar value is declining
- Culture quest—need to find new (and cultural) things for people to do
- Number of families as portion of tourists is increasing
- Shorter trips, but larger groups/families combining business and family services
- Support organizations speak up for industry

- Outdoor activities with family is increasing

What new jobs are emerging in your company or industry?

- Revenue management moving into FB/catering
- Spa attendants and directors
- IT positions
- Programs for kids
- Guest feedback systems and automations “@ Marriot – at your service”
- Golf grounds keepers
- Therapists
- Family travel—need babysitting services, pet services
- Company-driven... tracking customer experiences and learning what they need
- Plasma TVs, Internet, tech boom, savvy people, Internet marketing administrators, e-commerce managers
- Concierge must be savvy and do something different
- Wireless Internet support

Over the next five years, what jobs and job skills areas are being phased out from your company or industry?

- Less desk people—automated services
- No in-house reservations for large hotels but small hotels have different service needs (less reservations agents at 800#s)
- Management? Hourly positions?

What impact will aging of workforce have on staffing in your industry?

- Need tech savvy people. Crucial for almost any position and workforce is expected to have these skills
- We’re seeing people with too much technology [skills], too little people skills
- Benefits online—Hilton and Marriot have these
- Tech is key—we train in-house. All house-keepers need this skill too
- Entry-level productivity not affected, but doesn’t affect day-to-day
- Multi-lingual is not required, but is an advantage
- Department of Education should mandate learning another language
- Technology works around language issues

Discussion Topic 3: Staff Development & Training

What are you currently doing to train and update the skills of your employees?

- Training new people, it’s important that they get a good foundation—there’s not a lot of time to do all that needs to be done.
- Build these core competencies
- The more you cross-train, it’s advantageous—that stems from evaluating individuals and adjusting positions to their skills
- Attitude is important
- Put people in different positions to see entire system—cross-training
- Shadow training with checklist
- Harassment in workforce training—internal
- Language training
- Require management to take Microsoft training (Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Access)
- Supervisory skills training—external training
- Assessment process to identify talent
- Local competency training
- ADA training
- New team member orientation

What method would work best to help you to partner with the educational community to address your company’s training needs?

- Job shadow days with high school students—there’s a school we work with or AHLA program, we’ve tried to bridge that gap. 40 now throughout the state, teacher works with industry people
- Internship programs
- Educated community can mobilize and come to us for training
- Career days with schools and association
- Appropriate dress (standards)
- The “me” mentality, we need to engage them—we really need to work at this
- Are teachers prepared? They’ve never worked in hospitality... they must have knowledge and experience

- Job training at tourism-related institutions

What job areas are hard to fill due to lack of sufficiently trained or skilled workforce?

- Licensed massage therapists, we get savvy travelers
- Housekeeping is not easy, it's a hard job
- Security agents
- Entry-level challenges with food styles (basic culinary skills)
- Stewards...cleaning
- Refrigeration/HVAC mechanics

What needs do you or your customers have that you are unable to meet because your employees don't have the necessary skills?

- Appearance
- Cleanliness
- Tattoos
- Clothing—grooming
- Personal hygiene
- Social skills
- Technology—audio/visual

How will technology affect your staff training and development capacity?

- We need training before we can train (train the trainers first)
- Can't get past service on personal level – may exclude people without skills
- Technology may eliminate training due to lack of opportunities to train, but will not overcome the need for customer contact
- Transportations and cabs for guests and team members

** This event was a pilot forum and questions in subsequent forums were altered based on analysis and discussion that took place at this event. Notes from subsequent forums will therefore reflect a different format. .*